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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/NGA AND PRM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#) [ADANA](#)

SUBJECT: KURDS IN SOUTHEAST OPTIMISTIC; HOPE
FOR PKK KADEK AMNESTY

(U) This cable is sensitive but unclassified;
please protect accordingly.

11. (SBU) Summary: Recent meetings with our regular Kurdish contacts reveal SE Turkey Kurds are optimistic about the resolution of the "Kurdish question" and are pinning their hopes on the international community, most notably the United States. They also believe an amnesty for PKK/KADEK members is critical to achieving peace within the country. Local Turkish officials, nevertheless, maintain that while not opposed to amnesty in principal, such an amnesty will only antagonize the problem further. In any event, Ankara seems willing only to consider a broadened repentance law, without attendant economic and social incentives. End summary.

Hope for a solution?

12. (SBU) Following the Coalition victory in Iraq, Southeastern Kurds are cautiously optimistic that a solution to Kurdish issues will be found. While it will take time to fully resolve the situation, the war in Iraq and the United States' "improved attitude" towards the Kurdish people signal a beginning to stronger international involvement in their plight. Our contacts vehemently state that only pressure by the USG on the GOT to solve this issue and inclusion of Kurds in the new Iraqi government will allow the Kurdish people the opportunity to live peacefully with a Kurdish identification in the region.

13. (SBU) Our meetings also reveal Kurds believe the first step to improving relations with the GOT is the freedom to identify themselves as Kurdish. However, our contacts also suggest that until Turkey completes its democratization process, this issue cannot be resolved; Turkey's current procedures, institutions, and Constitution are not equipped to permit ethnic groups, such as the Kurds, the opportunity to practice their traditions and live peacefully with other groups. Our contacts conclude that continued and strengthened pressure by the USG, as well as other international bodies such as the European Union, on the GOT, to fully democratize will give way to a peaceful solution to the tensions between the GOT and the Kurdish people.

14. (SBU) Prominent Adana Kurdish activists stress that amnesty would give PKK/KADEK members the opportunity to integrate into society creating peace in the country. They emphasize that the Kurdish people have lived peacefully with their neighbors in the region, including Iraq, and the GOT must play a facilitating role to maintain this. These Kurdish leaders believe amnesty would allow PKK/KADEK members the ability to live free of in fear of GOT repercussion for their previous acts, and allow them to fully lay down their arms and establish a peaceful role for themselves and their families within society.

"If they won't accept the Turkish Flag, they
shouldn't integrate into Turkish society!"

15. (SBU) Our local GOT contacts, however, say such an amnesty is not a feasible solution; nationalistic or ethnic identification only lends to the divisions within Turkish society. The opportunity to give such an amnesty would strengthen Kurdish identity and continue to divide the country. According to one contact, Kurdish people prefer to identify themselves with the smaller, "Kurdish" identity rather than the "Turkish" national identity; consequently, this regional identity leads to a weakening of society by dividing the country. Other contacts add that amnesty only achieves its purpose if both the perpetrator and the victim are in agreement. If the crimes are political in nature and hence committed against the State, the State may grant amnesty; but, if the crimes are against another person, only the victim or his/her family may grant amnesty. They argue that while some of the PKK/KADEK's crimes were political, many innocent families lost loved ones in the war; it should be their choice whether to grant amnesty.

Comment

16. (SBU) Comment: Kurdish contacts in the Southeast are optimistic that the disappointment suffered by the United States when the Turkish Parliament failed to pass the motion allowing US troops to be based out of Turkey will encourage the United States to give more credence to their plight and less sympathy to the GOT. However, aspirations for an amnesty are unrealistic; the most the Turkish State might be willing to bear in a broadened repentance law. Even that would not resolve the problem without attendant economic incentives and social measures. In this regard we see no signs either that Ankara has any creative ideas or that Kurdish businessmen or groups in the Southeast are willing to take initiatives on their own. End comment.
HOLTZ